Fundamentals

Politics can have a fundamental impact on military operations, particularly when the cooperation of many nations is required for success. The interaction of multiple Clausewitzian trinities of governments, peoples, and militaries creates a changeable and fragile partnership that can be fractured if the interests of individual nations are threatened.

Wayne Danzik, *Coalition Forces in the Korean War*

Even the soldiers of a Democracy cannot always understand the reasons back of strategic situations. Political and military reasons are worked out in cabinets and general staffs and soldiers obey orders.

Newton D. Baker, Secretary of State under
President Woodrow Wilson

Multinational operations include military forces from different nations. These operations are normally interagency operations. Conducting operations with foreign military partners, like operations with civilian partners, is uncommon to many soldiers, so a clear understanding of this different environment is necessary. This chapter provides the fundamental background that units will face when conducting multinational operations. US forces are increasingly more involved in United Nations (UN) operations and must plan accordingly.

The majority of US peace operations will be part of a UN peace operation. Their multinational character merits particular attention because national interests and organizational influence may compete with doctrine and efficiency. Consensus is painstakingly difficult, and solutions are often national in character. Commanders can expect contributing nations to adhere to national policies and priorities, which at times complicates the multinational effort.

UN-sponsored operations normally employ a force under a single commander. The secretary general appoints the force commander with the consent of the UN Security Council. The force commander reports either to a special representative of the secretary general or directly to the secretary general. While the force commander conducts day-to-day operations with fairly wide discretionary powers, he refers all policy matters to the special representative or secretary general for resolution. FM 100-23 is an excellent reference for UN operations.

OPERATIONS

Multinational operations is the overarching collective term to describe military actions conducted by forces of two or more nations, typically within the structure of a coalition or alliance. If that operation takes place within the NATO or Combined Forces Command (CFC) in Korea, it is an *alliance*

operation. If it is a multinational action outside the bounds of an established alliance, it is a *coalition operation.* These terms should not be used interchangeably. See the glossary for exact definitions.

DOCTRINE

Multinational operations can have uniform, robust, and widely accepted doctrine, such as Allied Joint Publication (AJP)-1 for NATO; however, this may not always be the case. Each situation and combination of forces is unique to a varying extent. National forces operate in their normal manner internally, and their actions generally conform to the overall direction of the multinational force (MNF).

Each alliance develops its own common doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP), but these normally conform with each member nation's doctrine. Coalitions are much less structured, and commanders must know the differences in the other partners' goals, doctrine, organizations, equipment, terminology, cultures, religions, and languages. For all multinational operations, commanders and staffs must know common considerations and factors beforehand to conduct the operations efficiently.

US Army forces operating as part of a multinational military command (alliance or coalition) should follow multinational doctrine and procedures previously agreed to by the US. For doctrine and procedures not ratified by the US, commanders should follow the multinational command's doctrine and procedures, where applicable. US joint doctrine provides the US position for multinational doctrine development consistent with existing security procedures.

PRINCIPLES

The principles of war apply to multinational operations. Two principles are key to successful multinational operations, *objective* and *unity of command.*

OBJECTIVE

Commanders must focus significant energy on ensuring that all multinational operations are directed toward clearly defined and commonly understood objectives that contribute to the attainment of the desired end state. No two nations share exactly the same reasons for entering into a coalition or alliance. Furthermore, each nation's motivation tends to change during the situation. National goals can be harmonized with an agreed-upon strategy, but often the words used in expressing goals and objectives intentionally gloss over differences. Even in the best of circumstances, nations act according to their own national interests. Differing goals, often unspoken, cause each nation to measure progress differently. Thus, participating nations must agree to clearly defined and mutually attainable objectives.

UNITY OF COMMAND

The principle of unity of command is better explained as unity of effort for multinational operations. Successful multinational operations center on achieving unity of effort. This unity is extremely difficult to achieve without

each commander's individual attention. There must be a certain spirit of cooperation among the nations, and each participating nation must agree to provide the MNF commander sufficient authority to achieve unity of effort. This authority, however, is seldom absolute, and consensus is critical to success.

BATTLE DYNAMICS

Battle dynamics apply to multinational operations, and the details of their application are covered throughout this manual. This paragraph discusses battle dynamics in a multinational context.

BATTLE COMMAND

Leaders must assimilate a massive volume of information to visualize the battlespace, assess the situation, and direct the military action required to achieve victory. Visualizing the battlespace or disaster area requires the commander to go where his presence can be felt, where he can best influence operations, and where he can best express his will. Personal and interpersonal communication skills among differing nationalities are even more important in multinational operations. Even within US forces, electronic passage of communications will not serve as a substitute for face-to-face meetings. In multinational operations, language differences, national pride, and mutual confidence make interpersonal communication skills even more critical. Leaders must understand and accommodate national customs and more. Decision making and leadership are more complex in multinational operations for the same reasons. The commander must review command and control (C^2) techniques to ensure he gets accurate input and his desires are properly communicated and executed.

BATTLESPACE

Within a given battlespace, commanders must understand the effects of geography, infrastructure, and terrain; appropriately apply organic capabilities; and integrate joint, interagency, and multinational assets. Unity of effort is essential to operations within a given battlespace. Assets should be employed to maximize effects with less regard to national ownership. Defining a force's battlespace requires a detailed understanding of the other forces' weaponry, sensors, and methods of employment. Synchronization is more difficult because of the extra friction caused by different languages, doctrine, and procedures.

DEPTH AND SIMULTANEOUS ATTACK

The US can expect some disparity between the capabilities of its forces and those of its partners. Where the US provides a preponderance of forces, it will probably control or at least coordinate most attacks, both of lethal and nonlethal means. Extra effort may be necessary to synchronize the ground maneuver of multinational partners with US deep strikes. Clear control measures are needed to avoid fratricide.

EARLY ENTRY, LETHALITY, AND SURVIVABILITY

Although most recent early entry operations conducted in a multinational setting have been unopposed, this may not always be the case. The key points are coordinated with host nation (HN) forces and other multinational partners. Timely coordination enables planners to tailor forces and make the best early entry decisions regarding the flow of forces. Other nations can provide many core capabilities that the US may not need to deploy; conversely, if other forces do not have key capabilities, US planners can move such capabilities up in the deployment flow.

COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT

Multinational logistics are crucial, especially during deployment, entry, and redeployment operations. Support functions must be integrated among different national military forces, HN assets, and contractors. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss these issues in detail.

MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

US commanders throughout our history have operated with MNFs, starting with George Washington and his partnership with the French allies. In the twentieth century, Generals Pershing, Eichelberger, Eisenhower, Ridgway, Westmoreland, Abrams, and Schwartzkopf and Major General Nash all operated in difficult multinational environments. Success came from the commander's focus on the political objective, assigned mission, patience, sensitivity to the needs of other coalition members, and a willingness to compromise or come to a consensus when necessary.

TANGIBLE CONSIDERATIONS

After World War II, General Eisenhower said that "mutual confidence" is the "one basic thing that will make allied commands work." This is true for all multinational operations. This mutual confidence stems from a combination of tangible actions and entities and intangible human factors. Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 cover the tangible considerations, such as liaison and language.

INTANGIBLE CONSIDERATIONS

The intangible considerations that must guide the actions of all participants, but especially the senior commander, are briefly described here. These factors cannot guarantee success, but ignoring them can almost always guarantee failure.

Rapport

Rapport must be established among all of the nations' senior commanders. Rapport is a personal, direct relationship that only the commanders can develop. The commander's first concern when establishing rapport is the complete analysis and understanding of the characteristics, personality, capabilities, ambitions, and personal and professional habits of those various senior commanders within the MNF. Once he has this understanding, the keys to developing rapport are respect, trust, patience, and the ability to compromise. The result of good rapport among leaders is successful teamwork by their staffs and subordinate commanders and overall unity of effort.

Multinational operations are often difficult. Differing national agendas can be disruptive, but, on a more personal level, the natural competitiveness among soldiers and nations can become a serious problem. Such competitiveness can be a motivating factor if properly managed, but, left unchecked, it can become destructive to the cohesion of the multinational effort. Multinational commanders at all levels must reinforce the fact that all MNFs are on the same team. Establishing an atmosphere of cooperation and trust at the highest levels of any multinational effort is essential. When such an atmosphere is established, subordinate commands are influenced positively.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

During the New Guinea campaign in World War II, General Douglas MacArthur dispatched Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger to the area to improve the poor situation. Prior to Eichelberger's arrival in Papua, an adversarial relationship had developed between US and Australian commanders. Australian leaders had questioned the fighting capability of US forces and similar charges were made by the American side regarding the Australians.

One of Eichelberger's first acts upon assuming command in Papua was to send a communique to Lieutenant General Edmund Herring, the Australian appointed by MacArthur to be the field commander of the Papua operation. In this message, Eichelberger informed Herring that he was anxious to cooperate with the Australians. Herring, who had been terse in his previous correspondence with Elchelberger, mellowed considerably subsequent to this event.

Upon Herring's return to Port Moresby to command all operations on New Guinea, he appointed Eichelberger field commander of a corps comprised of both Australian and American units. This was the first time in the war that the Australians placed their troops under the tactical command of an American officer. The quality Eichelberger possessed that made him particularly suited to the multinational environment was his ability to demonstrate to his allies his belief that personal and national prestige cannot be allowed to interfere with harmony within the partnership. These abilities, coupled with his skill in promoting a spirit of teamwork with allied forces, enabled him to command effectively in the multinational arena.

The commander must be visible to members of the coalition. Personal visits to allied units provide the opportunity to assess capabilities, readiness, and morale. The commander must ensure equitable treatment and exposure of all units, regardless of national background. Failure to do so may be perceived as prejudice and result in political repercussions. All members must have fair representation on multinational planning staffs to preclude allegations that any nation was excluded from participation in the decision-making process.

Establishing rapport within the partnership is more easily accomplished when nations combining forces share similar cultural backgrounds. Conversely, the partnership can be fractured when members come from diverse cultural backgrounds and do not attempt to respect one another's cultural sensitivities.

Desert Storm proved that a successful coalition among nations having widely disparate social and cultural norms is achievable. American commanders ensured that their soldiers received education regarding social norms prevalent in the Middle East and imposed measures to respect these norms. Arabic coalition leaders, for their part, allowed American and other Western coalition forces liberties that would not normally be permitted under Islamic law. Allowing female soldiers to drive vehicles and perform other duties forbidden by Saudi Arabian law and permitting the conduct of non-Islamic religious services would not be considered major concessions by Western standards, but in Saudi Arabia, these allowances were extremely significant.

Respect

Respect must exist among multinational partners. All should perceive they are contributing equally toward accomplishing the mission, regardless of the senior member's rank or size of the national force. Respect for the partners' culture, religions, customs, and values, combined with understanding and consideration of their ideas, will solidify the partnership. Without the genuine respect of others, rapport and mutual confidence will not exist, and lack of respect may lead to friction, which jeopardizes mission accomplishment.

Knowledge of Partners

Know the multinational partners as well as you know the enemy or adversary. Much time and effort is expended in learning about the enemy and perhaps even more important is a similar effort to understand the partners. Each partner in an operation has a unique cultural identity. Nations with similar cultures face fewer obstacles to interoperability than nations with divergent cultural outlooks. Commanders and planners must learn the capabilities of partner nations or organizations. These capabilities differ based upon national and organizational interests and objectives, political guidance and limitations on the national force, doctrine, organization, rules of engagement (ROE), rules of interaction, laws of armed conflict (LOAC), equipment, religions, customs, history, and a myriad of other factors.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE

In Somalia, certain Somali factions targeted the Nigerian national contingent for repeated attack. The Nigerian sector did not have any unique features warranting attack, and the Nigerians did not provoke attacks. What planners had not considered was that Nigeria had earlier granted the former President of Somalia, Siyad Barre, political asylum in Nigeria. Some Somalis took revenge on Barre by targeting the Nigerian soldiers for attack.

Appropriateness of Missions

All participants must perceive missions as appropriate, achievable, and equitable in terms of burden and risk sharing. Capabilities are an obvious factor, but national honor and prestige may be as important to the partnership as battlefield capability. Partners should be included in the

planning process, and their opinions must be sought concerning mission assignment. The political impact of high casualties must be balanced against practical military choices.

Patience

Developing effective partnerships takes time and attention. Diligent pursuit of a trusting, mutually beneficial relationship with multinational partners requires untiring, even-handed patience.

COMMUNICATIONS

The ability to communicate in the different partners' languages cannot be overemphasized because language barriers represent a significant challenge. Language is more than the direct translation of words. Much information is conveyed by word choice, mannerisms, and so forth. Language capability speeds battle command, reduces confusion, and contributes to mutual respect. Language barriers cause immediate difficulties for the MNF commander in interoperability with partners.

> *It's difficult to sustain a rapid decision cycle in combined operations.... Even the most common tasks, such as sharing intelligence, must await translation before data can be passed through the command. This, in turn, slows the development of a plan, which, in turn, slows the other elements of the decision cycle.*
>
> General Robert W. Riscassi

Forces must be able to effectively exchange commands, ideas, and information if they are to operate successfully together. Few linguists have both the technical expertise and depth of understanding to cross both language and doctrinal boundaries and be fully understood.

Desert Storm operations provide examples of how language problems can be overcome. The use of US special operations forces (SOF), other personnel with requisite language training, and contracted Kuwaiti nationals provided liaison with Arabic-speaking coalition units. Headquarters, Joint Forces Command placed these teams down to battalion level in the Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, Syrian, and Kuwaiti Armies. In addition to these vertical control mechanisms, specially equipped US Army and Air Force personnel provided horizontal communications between adjacent units to overcome the problem of dissimilar communications equipment. This provided coalition members access to artillery, long-range rocket systems, and tactical and theater strategic air power.

In future multinational operations, differences in language, communications equipment, and procedures will continue. Planners must consider liaison officers, foreign area officers (FAOs), and language-capable personnel to overcome these difficulties. Planners must determine requirements for language-trained personnel early in the planning cycle. These language-qualified personnel will probably require a training period to familiarize themselves with technical terms and procedures of the organization. Linguistic requirements are not confined to liaison officer (LNO) teams or headquarters

elements. Linguists are needed throughout the logistics functions as well to coordinate with local authorities, civilian transportation coordinators, refugee and relief centers, hospital staffs, legal offices, and local police forces.

Communications are one of the most difficult challenges in exercising effective C^2 of an MNF. In addition to problems of compatibility and security, many units do not have enough communications equipment to meet mission requirements. Communication planners must play an active role in the MNF's initial operations planning process to identify the required communications architecture to interconnect the MNF. Liaison teams, with adequate communications gear, can reduce the severity of some of these problems. Satellite communications are needed to provide communications between the higher level MNF headquarters to facilitate C^2. Other space-based services, such as weather reporting and use of global positioning systems, may also be needed by elements of the MNF. Communications planners must anticipate these requirements during initial deployment planning, evaluate HN communications resources, and integrate them into the overall communications structure. Continual centralized interfacing between key communications planners during planning, rehearsal, and operational phases helps alleviate interoperability issues. Planners should address issues of spectrum management and controls on access to information systems early in planning.